

Wellington (Somerset)

Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

For 1903.

BY DR. J. MEREDITH,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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Annual Report for 1903,

By DR. J. MEREDITH.

Medical Officer of Health.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit my report on the general health of the people, and the condition of the Urban Sanitary District of Wellington for the year 1903.

The AREA of the District is 5295 acres.

The TOTAL POPULATION as given by the census 1901—7283. The present estimated population is 7396.

The NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES is 1687.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS TO EACH HOME, 4·238.

The GEOLOGY of the District was fully entered into in the report for 1893.

THE OCCUPATION of the people remains unchanged.

BIRTH-RATE per 1000 living 21·8.

DEATH-RATE per 1000 living 12·3.

There have been no deaths from any of the notifiable zymotic diseases recognised by the Urban Authority.

The INFANT MORTALITY 74·5 per 1000 births.

WATER.—The water supply of the district has been good and ample and the additional supply mentioned in last year's report continues to prove satisfactory.

SEWERAGE.—The question of the town sewerage has now entered upon a practical and definite stage ; but there is nothing to report as to work accomplished.

The scheme proposed to and accepted by the Local Government Board will be carried out in due course.

SCAVENGING.—The scavenging has been carried out as in former years.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—I have to state that 34 cases were notified under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act.

Of these 34, 30 were returned as Scarlet Fever, 3 as Erysipelas, and 1 as Typhoid.

There was no fatal result among them and the character of the illness, in nearly every case, was mild.

The Enteric fever was an imported one as mentioned in reports for September 17th and October 1st.

The illness was imported from Plymouth and it is believed to have been caused by polluted milk.

The Scarlet fever cases cropped up at irregular intervals extending from January to the end of November.

They did not materially affect the Elementary School Attendance nor cause any general anxiety.

Isolation as far as practical was carried out in every case and disinfection of rooms after convalescence.

It was impossible to trace the illness to any common origin.

The ages of the patients varied. 20 were between 5 and 15, 6 were under 5, and 4 were over 15 (vide Table III).

DEATHS.—There were 91 deaths in the district during last year. Three of these deaths were those of persons who did not belong to the district. (Two of these died at the Workhouse, and one of injury at the Cottage Hospital).

Twelve deaths occurred among children under one year of age. Of these, seven have been set down as due to premature birth.

Three died between the ages of 1 and 5 years

Four „ „ „ 5 and 15 years

Five „ „ „ 15 and 25 years

Twenty-two died „ „ 25 and 65 years

Forty-two died at 65 and upwards.

Eight deaths took place in the Union Workhouse and Cottage Hospital, and out of the eight three belonged to the Rural Sanitary District.

The death rate for the year has been 12·3 per 1,000 inhabitants—an unprecedented low rate of mortality.

CAUSE OF DEATH.—Three died from epidemic influenza, three from gastric disorders, and three from other septic diseases, nine from phthisis, three from other tuberculous diseases, two from cancer, 10 from bronchitis, pneumonia and diseases of the respiratory organs. Alcoholism and cirrhosis of the liver have three deaths laid to their charge. Premature birth is responsible for seven. Heart disease caused 11 deaths, and two people died from accident and 31 deaths were due to other causes not specified in the regular table, making in all 88 deaths, the three outsiders being omitted from Table IV., except in column 16 where they are included with others.

INSPECTIONS.—Inspections have been carried on as on former occasions. The matters brought to notice have been similar practically to those detailed in former reports. The Sanitary Inspector, whose report book is before me, shows that broken gullies and drains, accumulation of refuse, defective water closets and privies, and in a few instances keeping pigs in an insanitary condition have had to be dealt with through the Urban Council.

A good deal of attention has been paid to DAIRIES and Cow Keeping.

Milch Cows in this district are kept out in the open almost all the year round, and instructions have been furnished to those milking the cows as to how cleanliness is to be observed by them in the discharge of their work.

The BUTCHERS' SLAUGHTER HOUSES have been regularly inspected and in each instance attention has been drawn to irregularities regarding cleanliness wherever such thing was called for.

All the Bakeries were also visited and the condition of things noted.

SCHOOLS. — The Elementary Schools of the district were frequently visited during the year—the appearance of the pupils and the condition of the premises were taken notice of, and year by year there is improvement.

RAINFALL.—The Rainfall of the year has been exceptional. The amount has been 40·86, about 10 inches more than the average. Rain was registered on 208 days. Wet years have always been noted for a low death rate and this has been the case during 1903.

VAGRANTS.—A great number of vagrants passed through the district. Although there is no registered Lodging House these people chiefly frequent a house in Cornhill and the Casual Wards at the Union Workhouse.

There is no account of any of them being the means of bringing infectious illness into the district.

The following is a return of those who went to the Casual Ward.

	Lady-Day.	Mid.	Mich.	Xmas.	Tot.
Men.....	780	560	447	719	2506
Women ...	41	41	23	38	143
Children...	16	17	9	12	54
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J. MEREDITH, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Dated 21st January, 1904.

